



pRide



DECEMBER 1996/JANUARY 1997

THE NEWSLETTER BY AND FOR

RHODE ISLAND STATE EMPLOYEES

BENEFITS UPDATE

by **Brian E. Keeler, Chief of Employee Benefits**

• PRE-PAID LEGAL PLAN

Prudential Legal Care has replaced Midwest Legal Services as the underwriter of the State's payroll deduction legal plan. The contract was awarded as the result of a recent competitive bid. The Prudential plan design offers easy access to an attorney, including benefit enhancements such as unlimited telephone time, estate administration, closing costs, and name change. Premium costs have been reduced by 7%.

Current legal plan participants are covered under the new plan effective on November 10, 1996. An Open Enrollment will be held early next year for those employees who wish to enroll for the first time or to change from single to family coverage. If an employee's attorney is not currently in the Prudential network of attorneys, the employee may call Prudential Customer Service who will attempt to add the attorney to the network. Questions regarding the new benefits and for attorney information, call 1-800-848-2012.

• LIFE INSURANCE PLAN

Insurance plan summaries will be available at each agency Personnel Office in December, reflecting the benefits available under the Aetna Group Life plan effective July 1, 1996. Aetna will be announcing soon a new beneficiary management program which will provide better service to employees, agencies, and beneficiaries. Instead of calling your personnel/payroll office or the State Employee Benefits Office as you have in the past, you can now call and speak directly with a Customer Service Representative at Aetna's Life Insurance Service Center in Hartford, Connecticut. A trained professional understands the specifics of the State of Rhode Island plan and will be able to assist you, your family or agency to: report a death claim; change beneficiary; or answer questions about group life beneficiary designation or benefits.

Also, Aetna will conduct a complete re-enrollment of all current participants. You will be asked to complete a new beneficiary card and return it to Aetna. The purpose of this initiative is to assure that the most current beneficiary information is available, and to generally raise the awareness of each participant regarding this important benefit.

In conjunction with these changes, an Open Enrollment will be held during January 1997. Employees who wish to enroll may do so at that time without completing "evidence of insurability". Further details will be mailed to all employees in December.

• FLEXIBLE BENEFITS PLAN

The State will introduce a new IRS approved tax saving plan on March 1, 1997. Also known as a Section 125 Cafeteria Plan,

employees will be able to redirect contributions to certain payroll deduction plans **pretax**. Your income will increase proportionately, depending upon the level of your contributions, since that portion will not be subject to tax. Qualified plans include Cancer Plan, Short-Term Disability Plan (AFLAC only) and the first \$50,000 under the Group Life Plan. Also, any premium contributions to a health plan would be eligible.

Additionally, employees who have a child in day care under age 12 or spouse or other disabled dependent who requires day care may participate in a Section 129 Dependent Day Care Account. Up to \$5,000 in expenses annually may be redirected pretax through salary, again reducing your tax liability. Further details will be available soon to all agencies and employees.

GIFTS FOR TEENS

If you, your organization, church, temple or mosque would like to make the holiday season a little happier for young people who cannot be with their families during the holidays, please call **Christine** at **738-9915** to adopt a group of teens in residential care. As an alternative, you may mail an unwrapped gift, gift certificate, or a check payable to **RIFPA** (RI Foster Parents Association) to **Teen Gift Campaign, RI Department of Children, Youth and Families, Building #7, 610 Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Providence, RI 02908**. There are more than 3200 teens in the care and custody of the state who could benefit from your generosity.

The October issue of **pRide** featured an article on the Families First Initiative with an emphasis on securing adoptive homes and permanency for children in DCYF care. Another important aspect of Families First, is the recruitment of foster homes for children who cannot remain with their biological parent(s) and for whom adoption is not an option at this time. Children in foster care, whether they are in foster homes or treatment facilities, deserve to share in the holiday season. Your help would be very much appreciated.

The State House Holiday Celebration Committee will open the Holiday Season on December 11 with the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony at 6:00 p.m. on the front lawn of the State House. Musical entertainment will be provided by the Cranston East High School choir, with guest Maria Day. A visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus will round-out the evening program.

The orchestras and choirs of Westerly, Ponaganset and Tollgate schools will present a musical program in the State House Rotunda from 12 noon to 1:00 p.m. on December 12, 16 and 17. All state employees and their families are invited to attend all events and celebrate the opening of the Holiday Season!

For more information, call **Rich Ferolito** at **277-2080**.



FROM THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

Executive Orders

96-11 9-6-96 Declaration of Health Emergency in Westerly.

96-11.1 11-12-96 Termination of Health Emergency in Westerly.

96-12 9-27-96 Reorganization of the Department of Business Regulation.

96-13 10-1-96 Creation of the Governor's Environmental Advisory Council.

96-14 10-16-96 Promotion of Equal Opportunity by State Government.

96-15 10-16-96 Continuation of Governor's Commission to Study Minority Representation in Criminal Justice System. For more information or copies of Executive Orders, call the **Office of the Executive Counsel, 277-2080, Ext. 258.**

NOTES FROM THE GENERAL TREASURER'S OFFICE



General Treasurer Mayer has named attorney **Barbara Murphy Boden** as the first administrator of the State's Crime Victims' Compensation Program. Under legislation proposed by Mayer, the state's only program for compensating victims for their out-of-pocket expenses switched in August from a court-based to an administrative system. Boden comes to Rhode Island after having served as assistant attorney general in Massachusetts, where she was deputy treasurer of the Bay State's program to compensate crime victims. She helped to write the legislation and then managed Massachusetts' 1994 switch from a court-based to administrative system. Boden helped to write the regulations that governed the administrative program, and supervised the staff investigators, crime advocates, and support employees. Since the switch, Massachusetts has eliminated a 2,000-case backlog. The new administrative system took effect in Rhode Island on August 21, 1996. "Rhode Island's compensation program was broken and I am proud to say that we now have the tools to fix it," Mayer said. "Barbara brings the kind

of sensitivity and experience that we need to make the new program work." For more information, contact the Crime Victims' Compensation Program at 277-2287.

General Treasurer Nancy Mayer has announced that the state has received more than \$2.5 million from the federal government, thanks to a discrepancy identified by **Carol Dutra** who manages the business office in the Treasury Department. Dutra found that the state overpaid the U.S. Social Security Administration \$2,534,191.41 in payroll withholding taxes from 1981 to 1986. The state applied for, and the federal government has repaid this amount. "For Rhode Island taxpayers, this is a 'Miracle on Fountain Street' Mayer said of the location of the Treasury Department office that monitors state payments and receipts. "This showcases what a single, hard-working state employee can do. Carol Dutra is a model employee worth her weight in gold to Rhode Island taxpayers." Dutra uncovered the overpayments during a routine review of old records. As an experienced bank operations officer, she checked the figures, discovered the accounting error and verified that the federal government would repay the state. The overpayment resulted under a now-defunct federal program in which the state estimated the amount of contributions it pays for state workers' social security. These funds will significantly ease the State's budget burden. "Treasury employees like Carol Dutra have helped to make the Treasurer's Office a money-generating machine for the state" Mayer said.

O.T.D.

Office of Training and Development

Winter Courses

December	Fee
3 Financial Planning — Start Now ...	\$20
12 DWI Laws	20
18 Effective Interviewing Techniques ...	25
18 Getting Your New Employee Started Right	25
20 Intermediate DOS	20
January	
3 Training Trainers	198
8 Managing Change	80
14 Making Effective Presentations	95
15 Adult ADHD — The Basics	30
15 Adult ADHD — Clinical Intervention ...	30

For more information call the Office of Training and Development (OTD) at 277-2877. For hearing impaired TDD 277-6144.

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Deadline for contributions to the February issue is January 10, 1997.

The State of Rhode Island is an equal opportunity employer and reasonable accommodations will be provided. For assistance, call EEO Office at 277-3990. (TDD 277-6144).

GROWING CHILDREN OF PROVIDENCE
ONE CAPITOL HILL
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

**CHILD CARE AVAILABLE FOR
CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN
OF STATE EMPLOYEES**

- * Innovative learning programs
- * well trained/qualified staff
- * safe, clean, healthy environment

Present opening for children:
6 wks — 1 yr and 3 & 4 yrs olds.

Call 331-3590

RHODE ISLAND'S MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (MPA) PROGRAM

By Francis J. Leazes, Jr., PhD
Dept. of Political Science, R.I. College

The demands on public servants for improved productivity and accountability have never been greater. These conditions put a premium on achieving the highest level of education possible for those charged with the public trust. The state's Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program is one way that Rhode Island state employees can stay on top of the latest developments in the field of public administration.

The University of Rhode Island and Rhode Island College have joined together to offer the MPA degree. The core courses in the program are offered conveniently in Providence in the evening at the URI Graduate and Professional Center at the College of Continuing Education. Electives in the program are routinely offered at Rhode Island College. The program accommodates part-time and full-time students, as well as those who simply want to take courses for a better understanding of public sector administration. State employees may take these courses (subject to applicable rules and regulations) for incentive credits.

The program concentrates on critical areas where productivity and accountability meet. Program evaluation and policy analysis, public budgeting, personnel administration, administrative law, and government ethics are all studied. The program stresses analytical reasoning and effective communication. One of the strengths of the program is being able to design concentrations in a wide range of policy areas. Two examples of specializations are government financial administration and environmental policymaking. However, the full range of graduate courses at URI and Rhode Island College are available to students to develop self designed concentrations such as instructional technology and public sector labor relations.

Full-time faculty in the Political Science departments at Rhode Island College and URI are the core faculty. The program also draws on Rhode Island's community of practitioners to teach specialized courses and to act as resources for the program. Our more than sixty students generally are mid-career professionals in state or local government, and from the nonprofit sector. Our students have won national recognition most recently with the selection of one of our students as a Presidential Management Intern, one of the premier post graduate awards an MPA student can earn. Financial aid is available for full-time students.

Requests for additional information and for applications can be made to the Director of the MPA Program, Graduate and Professional Center, URI College of Continuing Education, 80 Washington St., Providence, RI 02903. Telephone inquiries should be made to Professor Francis J. Leazes, Jr. Director of MPA Program, 277-5200; 456-8056; Fax 456-8379.

There is an MPA informational meeting at the College of Continuing Education January 7, 1997 at 5:30 PM. Watch for an announcement.

The University of R.I. College of Continuing Education has opened a **Child Development Center** located on the first floor of the Shepard Building in downtown Providence. High quality Childhood Education available for children ages 3 to 5. Certified teachers with Masters Degrees.

Hours M-Th. 8:00-7:15. F. 8:00-5:15 and Saturday 8:45-3:30. Call **277-5264** for more information.

BITS 'n PIECES



Paul Hannaway retired from his position as Public Utilities Commissioner at the end of November. Paul has had a lengthy and distinguished career in state government having served as state Senator, Deputy General Treasurer, and Parliamentarian for the Senate, in addition to his tenure as PUC Commissioner. The many friends Paul made at all the stops along his career path wish him all the best for a long and productive retirement from state service.

Barbara C. Ruffino, director of the RI Department of Elderly Affairs (DEA), has been elected to the board of directors for Women Executives in State Government (WESG). Director Ruffino will chair the 1997 program committee. WESG is a national nonpartisan organization, headquartered in Washington, D.C., for women serving in top appointed and elected positions in the executive branch of state government. The organization's membership includes Rhode Islanders **A. Kathryn Power**, director of MHRH; **Christine Ferguson**, director of DHS; and **Edna Poulin**, director of the Department of Labor.



Joe Gentile, a supervisor in environmental services at the Eleanor Slater Hospital, received the Hospital Association of Rhode Island's Award for Excellence in Hospital Care at a ceremony held recently at Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet. Created in 1991, the award recognizes employees of HARI's member hospitals who have demonstrated exemplary job performance.

The **Narragansett Bay Commission (NBC)** has gone on-line, providing employees and the general public with access to timely information about Rhode Island's largest wastewater agency. The NBC web site can be located at <http://www.narrabay.com>.



DCYF's **Michael Ayer**, a Social Case-worker II in Region IV (Northern and Northwestern Rhode Island), was chosen Counselor of the Year by the Rhode Island Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors, Inc. Ayer was chosen by popular election, and the award was presented at a RIAADAC Forum luncheon. He has also been voted onto the Board of Directors of the Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors, where he will represent them on the R.I. Board of Certification of Chemical Dependency Professionals.

GOVERNOR SIGNS TRANSITION ACT



Governor Lincoln Almond, surrounded by state officials and North Kingstown School students, signs the 1996 School-To-Work Transition Act. The act acknowledges the support of state government for school-to-work, which commits to high standards and high achievement for "all kids".

This Calendar is Brought to You by

The Office of Personnel Administration

1997

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1997 State Holiday Celebrations

New Year's Day	-	Wednesday, January 1
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday	-	Monday, January 20
Memorial Day	-	Monday, May 26
Independence Day	-	Friday, July 4
Victory Day	-	Monday, August 11
Labor Day	-	Monday, September 1
Columbus Day	-	Monday, October 13
Veteran's Day	-	Tuesday, November 11
Thanksgiving Day	-	Thursday, November 27
Christmas Day	-	Thursday, December 25

Circled Days Indicate Pay Day for State Employees

Choosing a new name isn't easy.



United Health Plans of New England, Inc. is now United HealthCare of New England, Inc. We've always been proud of our reputation, but now we think it's time to tell others about the corporation that has been guiding us for years. By officially changing our name, we're celebrating our long-standing relationship with United HealthCare Corporation — an organization that, according to a Fortune magazine survey, is the most admired health care management services company in the country. A company that has made its name not just by managing care, but by managing information in new ways — then sharing that knowledge with doctors, employers and members to consistently improve the quality of service. In fact, if you've been a United Health Plans of New England member, you've been feeling the benefits of United HealthCare's philosophy and expertise for years. And, if you're looking for coverage, we invite you to learn more about United HealthCare of New England by calling 1-800-447-1245.

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of New England

WHICH HMO DO LOCAL CONSUMERS RATE #1 FOR OVERALL MEMBER SATISFACTION?



1996
Healthcare
Market Guide

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Overall Member Satisfaction

NATIONAL RESEARCH CORPORATION

NATIONAL RESEARCH CORPORATION'S 1996 QUALITY LEADERS

In the nation's largest consumer-based health care profile, National Research Corporation (NRC) asked 170,000 U.S. households in more than 100 metropolitan areas how they felt about local health plans, physicians, hospitals and health systems. And from what Rhode Island's residents had to say, United HealthCare has more



QUALITY LEADER

NATIONAL RESEARCH CORPORATION

satisfied members than any other commercial HMO in the area.

This distinction earned United HealthCare a 1996 Quality Leader Award from NRC, a nationally recognized firm in the measurement of health care performance.

United HealthCare extends its thanks to our valued members – the friends, neighbors and coworkers we serve. You made this honor possible. Your satisfaction counts.

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of New England